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LETTER TO SECRETARY.

PEACEDALE, R. I., NOV. 21. 1890.

On the 22d of September, 1890, I wrote a letter to Right Hon. Wm. E. Gladstone, in which I remarked that "Christian nations are determined upon maintenance of Peace and Good Will, if possible."

"Peace prevails to-day, and has done so during several years. Might not its permanence be assured, if France could be pacified in regard to the two Provinces which Germany wrested from her a few years ago?"

"Is it not probable, if Germany and France would unite in an agreement that these two Provinces shall be at liberty to decide, by vote, which of these two nations they would choose to unite with, Peace would be assured; especially, in case each of these two claimants should obtain one of them." * *

I am aware that war, on a small scale, constantly occurs, but this is generally on the outskirts of civilization, and more like raids of barbarians upon each other, whose chief object is plunder, and it will disappear so soon as the light of the public school-house shall have dawned upon them.

JOS. PEACE HAZARD.

ARBITRATION AS TO THE SEAL FISHERIES.

The American Peace Society responded favorably to our sister societies in England and commended the English offer of arbitration as they did. We went further and memorialized our Government in favor of such arbitration, but preferred that "all rights ceded to the United States by Russia or dependent on international law should be thus adjudicated."

The response of our Government is found in the President's message which we quote elsewhere. Mr. Hodgson Pratt in *Concord* for November calls attention anew to the Blaine-Salisbury correspondence and remarks:

"Great Britain must concede that claim before arbitration is accepted on any matters of secondary importance. In other words, they claim special rights over Behring Sea entitling them to control the seal fishing."

"This means that agreement is far off, while delay may at any moment lead to some collision between American cruisers and Canadian fishing vessels and so embroil the two governments. The peacemakers of the two countries should therefore study the points at issue, that they may judge whether Mr. Blaine has such legal and historical justification for his claim as to warrant this refusal to submit it to the consideration of impartial judges."

"As a contribution towards consideration of this last question, we give the following extracts and summary of four despatches which contain the whole case: Mr. Blaine's letter of last January, Lord Salisbury's reply of May, Mr. Blaine's rejoinder of July, and Lord Salisbury's despatch of 2nd August last, with which at present the correspondence concludes, no answer having as yet been received."

EXTRACTS AND SUMMARY.

Mr. Blaine says:—"The fur-seal fisheries of Behring Sea are one of the most valuable sources of revenue from the Alaskan possessions of the United States. They were 'exclusively controlled' by Russia without interference and without question until the cession of Alaska

to the United States in 1867. This possession was undisturbed until 1886. 'The uniform avoidance of all attempts to take fur-seal in those waters had been a constant recognition of the right held and exercised first by Russia and subsequently by this Government.' It has also been the recognition of a fact now held beyond denial or doubt that the taking of seals in the open sea rapidly leads to their extinction."

In 1886, "Canadian vessels asserted their right to enter, and, by their ruthless course, to destroy the fisheries, and the Government of the United States proceeded to check them."

"The Canadian vessels take fur-seal in a manner which destroys the power of reproduction," and ensures extermination. The American Government claim the same rights on these lands and waters which were conceded to the Empire of Russia.

Lord Salisbury says that "it is an axiom of international law that to seize on the high seas and confiscate in time of peace the private vessels of a friendly nation is only admissible in the case of piracy or in pursuance of a special international agreement."

As to the alleged exclusive monopoly of Russia, Lord Salisbury quotes a despatch from Mr. Quincy Adams that the United States refused to admit the claim of Russia to exclude foreign vessels from approaching within one hundred miles of the coasts and islands. In 1837 the United States Government claimed the right to fish in these seas under the law of nations; and in a debate on the proposed purchase of Alaska, Mr. Sumner said "no sea is now a *Mare clausum*."

Regarding the allegation that from 1867 to 1886 the United States held uninterrupted possession, without intrusion, Lord Salisbury quotes documents to show that British vessels had been at various times engaged in the fur-seal fisheries with the cognizance of the United States Government. Mr. Secretary Boutwell also wrote that they could not "drive off parties going there for this purpose," unless "within a marine league of the shore." Lastly, the British Government are willing to consider "whether international agreements are necessary for the protection of the fur-seal industry."

Mr. Blaine states in reply "that in the above quotation from Mr. Quincy Adams' despatch, words were omitted which afford a conclusion entirely different from that drawn by Lord Salisbury."

He then says the Treaties of 1825 and 1871 renounced for England and America all rights in these seas during Russia's sovereignty, i. e., accepting the prohibition to vessels approaching the coast nearer than one hundred miles. From 1825 (date of above Treaty) to 1867 (date of transfer of Alaska to the United States) Great Britain has never affirmed her right to capture fur-seal in Behring Sea.

Lord Salisbury replies that the words omitted, for brevity, from Mr. Adams' despatch do not effect the point at issue. He then quotes from correspondence between the Russian and American Governments to show that the latter denied any claim of the former to exclude foreign fishing vessels. He shows that England denied the Russian claims, and that the convention of 1825 was a renunciation of those claims. The British Government therefore, claims the right of navigation and fishing in Behring Sea, outside the usual territorial limits. That right was not abandoned by the fact that there were, at first, no persons to claim it.

Finally, the British Government do not "refuse to the United States any jurisdiction which was conceded to Russia, and which properly accrued to the present possessor of Alaska in virtue of treaties or the law of nations." The despatch concludes with an offer of arbitration if the Government of the United States still differs as to the legality of recent captures of British ships.

HEBREWS AND CHRISTIANS.

A Hebrew-Christian Conference was held in Chicago on Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 24 and 25. The programme included an address by Rev. Dr. E. P. Goodwin on "The Attitude of Nations and of Christian People toward the Jews," an address by Rabbi Bernhard Felsental on "Why Israelites do not Accept Jesus as the Messiah," a discussion of "The Religious Condition of the Jews To-day and their Attitude toward Christianity," by Rabbi Hirsch, and an address by Rev. John H. Barrows on "Israel as an Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion."

Tuesday's programme included an address by Rabbi Joseph Stolz on "The Past Biblical History of the Jews;" an address entitled "Jerusalem and Palestine as they are To-day and the Restoration of Israel," by Rev. Dr. J. M. Caldwell; an address on "Israel's Messiah," by Prof. D. C. Marquis; an address entitled "The Anti-Semitism of To-day," by a Jewish layman, and a closing address on "Israelites and Christians, their Mutual Relations and Warfare; or, Lessons in this Conference," by Prof. H. M. Scott.

A friendly conference is a step towards mutual toleration. The result if legitimate and unhindered must be an increase of mutual respect. The Orthodox Jews accept the entire Old Testament as do the Orthodox Christians. Unitarians are nearer Jews in creed than Trinitarians. We would not minimize to great and essential difference between Jew and Christian, namely, "What think ye of Christ?" But this meeting marks an era and is a portent.

A FEW PEACEFUL WORDS ANENT WAR.

I should be quite unworthy the warlike nature attributed to me by my friend, the correspondent of last week's *Commonwealth*, if I remained silent under the challenge of his words. I really cannot, without a bit of good-natured protest—final protest, I protest, O frowning Jove of the editorial chair! it shall be!—let past the imputation, so very often made, by Peace Societies against those not wholly in sympathy with their methods, that one defends war only through an inherent predilection for gore and destruction.

* *

Why cannot folk understand one another? Most controversies are carried on absurdly like the duel between *Sir Andrew Aguecheek* and *Viola*,—one combatant poking vaguely in the general direction where the other stands, but carefully covering the eyes from seeing where effectively to poke. Or to vary the metaphor, each sets up and knocks over a straw effigy—usually "not at all like"—of his adversary, and then, demolishing it, felicitates himself on victory. Rational controversy must rest on clear recognition of the adversary's exact position. And there must be premises in common before one can rationally disagree in any other than schoolboy, *tu quoque*, fashion.

Let us try, for once, to find the grounds of agreement and the points of disagreement between the Peace Societies and those whom they call—though they by no means call themselves—their opponents. Let us find, if we can, exactly where we each stand; and then let us tolerantly admit each that the other has a right to stand there.

* *

My friend the *Commonwealth* correspondent seems to indicate that the point of disagreement is that the Peace Societies "love peace and therefore are sensitive to cruelty and bloodshed," while the world outside, in general, and the peccant critic of Verestchagin in particular, do not love peace, and are insensitive to cruelty and bloodshed. Now this is one of the well-meant misstatements which kill argument and mutual understanding. The love of peace, the loathing of cruelty and bloodshed are not the points of difference between the Peace Societies and—and myself, let us say, for the sake of brevity. These things are exactly our best ground of agreement. We love peace precisely as fervently as any society formed to promote it. We loathe bloodshed and cruelty as every one in touch with true civilization must loathe them. There is no disagreement here; when the Peace Societies vaunt themselves because of these things, they vaunt us also.

* *

The true point of difference is sharply here. The Peace Societies claim that no evil can be worse than wars and that therefore war must be abolished *at any cost*? We claim that, deplorable as war in itself is, it is the only corrective yet discovered for certain evils which exist; and therefore war cannot as yet be *arbitrarily* (?) abolished with safety to civilization. Here and only here we disagree. (?) On this point alone can controversy rationally be carried on. [The italics and (?) are ours and commented on elsewhere.—ED.]

It will be seen that the horrors of war, *per se*, have absolutely nothing to do with the controversy. We grant them, freely and fully. If war is unjustifiable under any circumstances, then they are criminal. If war is justifiable, they are stern necessities, of which the less said the better, in the interest of manliness.

* *

To deny that evil exists which war alone, as civilization stands to-day, can remedy, is to take the Christian Science view of political matters. That is, a thing is presumably made non-existent, by the denial that it exists. But Christian scientists have been known, despite their assertion that disease and disabilities are figments of fancy, to visit the optician and dentist. Our new and beloved friend Ortheris, least of the Dauntless Three, puts the soldiers' side of the case a little roughly, but very justly, when he says: "Plucky lot of fightin' the Good Fight, as they call it, folks would do, if we soldiers didn't see they had a quiet place to fight in!"

* *

To keep exactly to our point of difference—is war ever justifiable? If, in the civilized and rational countries where the Peace Societies hold their meetings and urge their doctrines, they should succeed to-day in having it clearly known that the "strong arm" was finally paralyzed, does any one seriously suppose civilization would